

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 5-14 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 10 and 11 are amended; Claims 12-14 are added; and Claims 3 and 4 are canceled by the present amendment without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants respectfully submit that new claims and claim amendments find support in the application as originally filed, at least at original Claims 3 and 4 and in the specification at page 7, lines 16-24. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 5 was objected to; Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Yamakoshi et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2001/0021422, herein "Yamakoshi '422"); Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata et al. (European Publication No. EP 0955665 A2, herein "Murata"); Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata and Yamakoshi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,417,079, herein "Yamakoshi '079"); and Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata, Yamakoshi '079 and Himori et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2002-0134508, herein "Himori").

With respect to the objection of Claim 5, this claim is amended to correct informalities. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the objection to Claim 5 be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Yamakoshi '422. Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 are amended to include the subject matter of Claims 3 and 4. As conceded by the outstanding Office Action¹,

¹ See the outstanding Office Action, page 5, lines 7-13.

the combination of Yamakoshi '422 and Murata does not teach or suggest the subject matter of Claim 4. Therefore, the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 (and all claims dependent therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Yamakoshi '422 is believed to be overcome.

As noted above, the outstanding Office Action concedes that the combination of Yamakoshi '422 and Murata does not describe the features of previously presented Claims 4 and 5. However, the Office Action asserts that Yamakoshi '079 teaches the features lacking in Yamakoshi '422 and Murata, and further asserts that one of skill in the art would be motivated to combine these teachings to achieve the claimed invention.

Applicants' amended Claim 2 recites, *inter alia*, an apparatus for plasma processing including:

...a voltage distribution regulator configured to adjust a deviation in distribution of voltage on the discharge electrodes, the distribution of voltage occurring in a direction at right angles to a direction of fed electric power through the discharge electrodes,

wherein the voltage distribution regulator is an impedance changer which is provided to at least one of a plurality of high-frequency cables for supplying high-frequency electric power from at least a high-frequency electric power feeding circuit to the plurality of discharge electrodes in order to change an impedance at a feeding point for the discharge electrodes toward the high-frequency electric power feeding circuit, and

the impedance changer is a stub comprising a branch cable which branches off from the high-frequency cable.

Yamakoshi '079 describes a discharge plasma generating method, apparatus, and fabrication method used in the deposition of thin films of semiconductors wherein a discharge plasma of a reactive gas is used to increase the area and processing speed in the fabrication of diverse electronic devices.² Figure 7 of Yamakoshi '079 further discloses a variable impedance matching device 413 asserted to be a stub type matching device by the

² See Yamakoshi '079, column 1, paragraphs [0002] and [0003].

outstanding Office Action. However, Yamakoshi '079 does not teach or suggest the variable impedance matching device 413 to include a branch cable which branches off from a high-frequency cable.

Conversely, the use of a branch cable which branches off from a high-frequency cable as recited in Applicants' amended claims allows variation of the impedance at a discretionary point on a circle in a Smith chart. In other words, the impedance can be arbitrarily varied. Specifically, the stub can change the impedance with a change in a constant of the passive element as described in Claim 5. Thus, unlike Yamakoshi '079 in which the impedance cannot be changed toward the high impedance side, the presently claimed invention allows the impedance to be changed to a higher or lower impedance as desired with a simple arrangement whereby the distribution of the thickness of a formed film can be controlled and a uniform film can be formed.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Yamakoshi '422, Murata and Yamakoshi '079 whether taken individually or together do not teach or suggest "the impedance changer is a stub comprising a branch cable which branches off from the high-frequency cable" as recited in amended Claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 2 (all claims dependent therefrom) patentably define over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata and Yamakoshi '079.

Although different in scope or statutory class, independent Claim 1, also patentably define over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata and Yamakoshi '079 for at least the same reasons discussed above for Claim 2.

Further, independent Claims 10 and 11 recite:

...connecting the voltage distribution regulator to at least one of a plurality of high-frequency cables, said voltage distribution regulator is an impedance changer that includes a stub branching off from the high-frequency cable;

supplying high-frequency electric power from at least a high-frequency electric power feeding circuit to the plurality of discharge electrodes;
changing an impedance at a feeding point for the discharge electrodes toward the high-frequency electric power feeding circuit

As stated above, Yamakoshi '079 does not teach or suggest connecting a voltage distribution regulator which is an impedance changer including a stub branching off from a high-frequency cable. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 10 and 11 also patentably define over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata and Yamakoshi '079.

With respect to the rejection of Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata, Applicants respectfully submit this rejection is rendered moot by the cancellation of Claim 3. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata, Yamakoshi '079 and Himori. Claims 6 and 7 depend from independent Claim 2 which is believed to patentably define over Yamakoshi '422 in view of Murata, Yamakoshi '079 as stated above. In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that Himori fails to supply the claimed features lacking in the disclosures of Yamakoshi '422, Murata and Yamakoshi '079. Thus, it is respectfully requested that rejection also be withdrawn.

New Claims 12-14 find support in the specification as originally filed, at least at page 7, lines 16-24. New Claims 12-14 depend from independent Claim 1, and thus are patentable for at least the same reasons described above.

With regard to withdrawn Claims 8 and 9, it is respectfully requested that these claims be rejoined and allowed, as they depend from Claim 2, which is believed to be allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 as amended and claims depending therefrom, are allowable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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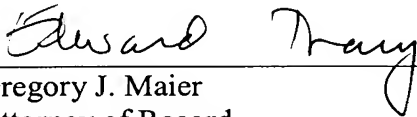
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